

SUMMARIES

Ida Dominijanni, *Venus's Strabismus: A Look at the Crisis of Politics From the Politics of Difference* (*El estrabismo de Venus: una mirada a la crisis de la política desde la política de la diferencia*, p. 12). One of the main features of Italian feminism of “difference”, seen from an international perspective, is its clear political vocation. This vocation is not only, or not specially, limited to the boundaries of gender politics, but is rather to be found in the radical critique or reconsideration of the traditional political categories, in the invention of new practices, in the redefinition of the sphere itself of politics and in the forms of its transformation. The Italian case, insofar as feminism is concerned, is also characterized by the fact that this feminist political critique has been kept up for over three decades alongside the crisis of traditional politics. The objective of this article is two-fold: on the one hand I analyse the relationship between the political crisis and the critique of politics seen from within the wider framework of the relationship between the disappearance of the patriarchy and the end of modern politics; on the other, I look at the resources that may derive from a feminist thought and be put into practice at the present time, which, in Italy, seems to be marked not only by a crisis, but also by the collapse of democracy.

Monica Benedetti, *Paedophilia* (*Pedofilia*, p. 36). Setting out from her own experience of abuse, a displacement is proposed of the symbolic order in terms of the debate on paedophilia and, in general, the violence of men against women and girls and boys. Since there is no male adult absolutely above suspicion. “The problem of male sexuality and its symbolic –writes the author– lies before us in all its seriousness. Each time that a paedophile is publicly accused, we should not run the risk of making all the rest of men believe that, in “doing justice”, the score is settled. It is necessary, rather, to be careful with the good men, who want to protect those they love from the disorders and imbalances of the bad men: male sexuality is one and

the same, the only distinction possible lies between those who accept responsibility and the risks it carries and those that believe that it is more than a 'natural' thing to us. For the first, it turns into a life commitment: for the second, it is in danger of being a risk whose vicissitudes can depend on chance (the "temptations" that each one, when least expecting it, might find on his path)". Given all of this, the author proposes that the victims speak, in such a way that their stories are really listened to. And that they are deeply loved. "Much is spoken of the presumed sickness suffered by the abusers;" -she writes- "I would like us to talk about the real sickness of the victims, and of those who give them time to heal, of the men and the women who care for their wounds with solicitude, patience and bravery, whilst penal justice duly follows its course. My life today has been given to me by those who cared for me and gave me back wholeness, they helped me to give up hate and to choose freedom again. If the work of love that labours tirelessly around the pain of violence were to be placed at the centre of the public debate, we would perhaps have a more precise idea of the extent to which the misery is on the side of those who, raping women, boys and girls, exclude themselves from the best that human beings are capable of, that being relationships of care based on exchange and gratuity."

Marirì Martinengo, *The Voice of Silence* (*La voz del silencio*, p. 42). Memory and history of a woman deprived of one and the other: this could be the summary of the book; the book, in fact, was born of a desire that is -at the same time- the fulfilment of a promise, tacit, but no less binding: that the narration of the human history of the central character awakens in its descendants the debt of gratitude towards Ella and restores to her the loving memory that she has lacked.

The path taken by the narration starts with the work on herself carried out by the author; it is developed through

the disinterment and recomposing of memories, it meanders around the character's life stages, articulated and revitalised through images, and then takes its time with the historical reconstruction of atmospheres, places, customs, mentalities of the period, in such a way that, together with the central figure, familial and social silhouettes take on form, on a background that throws into relief innovative historiographical profiles.

Community of Living History (Marirì Martinengo, Laura Minguzzi, Marina Santini, Luciana Tavernini), **The Practice of Living History** (*La práctica de la historia viviente*, p. 62). We explain the road we have travelled since the birth in 1988 of the Community of Teaching Practice and Reflection and Historical Research until the change that, in 2006, after the publication of Marirì Martinengo's book *La voce del silenzio. Memoria e storia di Maria Massone donna "sottratta"* (ECIG, Genoa, 2005), led us to modify its name to that of Community of Living History.

The change of name was due to a new practice based on inward investigation as the driving force of a way of writing history by women, in the revelation of the subject that makes history, in the subject itself as a main document from which to start.

Laura Minguzzi, History Rejected, History as Signifying Life (*La historia rechazada, historia como vida significante*, p. 66). On the seabed trawled through the practice of living history, I have recovered my history, setting out from my deep and unresolved knots, which, with their tentacles, which were also periscopes, were slowing down or blocking my navigation in the free space of the ocean-world. In our group of living history I have returned to and gone through three basic moments of the past, and I have placed them, in the present, beneath the merciless lens of our free interpretation. The first knot, which is, shall we say, a long way back, looks into the suicide of my mother when I was an adolescent, its hidden repercussion on my life and the

close link between her death and Italian history in the violent change that was the transformation of Italy from an agricultural country to an industrial country in the sixties.

The second knot is an analysis of my difficulties in speaking in public and of the moments of *impasse*, interpreted as repercussions of my orphan-state in my political action, and the attributing of a meaning of rescue-compensation of my mother's memory to my action in women's spaces, for example, at the *Círculo de la Rosa*.

The third knot refers to my inner change as a driving operation in the mutation of our political practice when making history. I analyse the step that the modification of the name of our group meant, because for me it was a source of reflection upon my path, which at times seems to be a pilgrimage, existential and political.

Marina Santini, *The Ambiguous Face of Preference. A Historical Review* (*El rostre ambigu de la preferència. Un recorregut històric*, p. 76). The practice of living history has enabled me to re-read my experience and to look into the problematic knot between law, equality and the feminine preference looked at in its ambiguous meaning, valuing and excluding. I have seen how that connection can act as an obstacle to speaking in public, and is a possible origin of the difficulty of women who find themselves in the loneliness of power.

Luciana Tavernini, *The Dark Clots of Symbolic Disorder* (*Els obscurs grumolls del desordre simbòlic*, p. 84) I offer some reflections which, starting from personal points of conflict, symptoms of a symbolic disorder and illuminated by the practice of living history, show a different connection between the private and public, offer hypotheses as to the causes of the difficulty for some women of speaking and I present some models of feminine authority with

which to live in the world in a different way (the “savers of impossible situations”, the difference between generosity and wealth). Finally, I offer some ideas about how that practice modifies history and is in fact a new beginning.

María-Milagros Rivera Garretas, *Living History: Truer History* (*La historia viviente: historia más verdadera*, p. 98).

The relationship between the Italian thinking of sexual difference and some Spanish women historians has radically modified a part of historiography in the Castilian and Catalan languages of the last twenty years. The most important modification is has been posed by the idea and the figure of “living history”. The idea of “living history” belongs to Marirì Martinengo, and with her are working those women that make up the *Comunità di storia vivente* (Community of Living History) of the Milan Women’s Bookstore. It is born of a quite common form of women’s knowledge that consists of recognising and caring for the link between experience and word, between experience and writing, knowing that experience, word and writing are not the same. It causes, or can cause, in the woman historian a stirring of the soul which leads her to an awareness of the fact that her vocation for history has an intimate link with the sources of her personal experience, with her core. It is the sources of her experience which need to be interpreted and spoken by her, in the first place, when she writes history. It needs to be said by her in a faithful and perfectly erudite dialogue with the sources of the past, those sources that, not by chance, she has chosen to work with. The idea and the figure of “living history” bring to today’s historiography a radical change in symbolic horizon and in method.

M^a Dolores Molina Galván, *Researching Into the Live Practice of Renewal in Education* (*Investigar la práctica viva de la renovación pedagógica*, p. 112) The history of renewal in education is a history that is made up of intervals. A history

that makes it move between the visible and the invisible without any guarantee of continuity. The present-day moment is an example of this, of the difficulty experienced in trying to bring to the world the world of renewal in education. The research account offered in this article is an attempt, amongst so many others, to understand the present-day nature of this teaching and political experience. What is unique is that it takes experience as the core theme of meaning in order to follow the footprints that have made, and can make possible, the presence of renewal in education.

Lia Cigarini, *Work is Much More Than Merchandise* (*El trabajo es mucho más que mercancía*, p. 160). An interpretation of the meaning of women's work that goes beyond Marxism without going against it. It is an interpretation that gives room to what each woman feels on speaking about work, about economy, law: it does so understanding feeling as a form of knowledge that we as women particularly have. The experience of happiness that is, or can be brought about by both work and speaking of one's own work is therefore significant, talking about it in order to find shared words that might speak of the place that women's work occupies in each life and in the signifying of work in its totality. This happens, for example, when there is an awareness that women's work is work, not that of a minority, not the famous reserve army of women, but rather that of a majority, if we consider work to be both of the production and reproduction of human existence. This way of interpreting the meaning of work leads us to a new idea of the relationship between need and freedom, which in women's experience are not necessarily antagonistic, and a new idea of maternity. Work stops being only merchandise to become essentially the human activity of men and women.

Laura Mora Cabello de Alba, *The Work and Maternity of Women in a Single Space of Multiple Times* (*El trabajo y la maternidad de las mujeres en un espacio único de tiem-*

pos múltiples, p. 168). This text is about the capacity that women have who are mothers in the flesh and the women who are founding mothers in upholding a double yes: a yes to maternity and a yes to work. The duality productive work-reproductive work is broken with, as is the private-public duality, because we understand that the space in which this double yes occurs is one -life-, and the times in which it develops multiple and different. Breast-feeding is given as an example of nutritive work, also in its two versions -real and symbolic-, and of how it is necessary to manage oneself with care in that nutritive work that we as women develop with freedom, but in conditions, on many occasions, that are quite difficult.